



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
VIRTUAL FELLOWS PROGRAM
PROJECT DESCRIPTION – EUR/CARC**



This project seeks a Virtual Fellow to serve with the **Office of Caucasus Affairs and Regional Conflicts, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs (EUR/CARC)** as an **External Consultant to the United States Co-chair of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group**.

Fellow Location: The Fellow will serve virtually and will not be physically located at the Department of State.

Project Name: Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Mediation.

Background: The Nagorno-Karabakh region and surrounding territories have been under Armenian de facto control since a brief war in the early 1990s. The conflict poisons relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia and remains a major obstacle to regional integration in the South Caucasus. For the past two decades, the sides have been unable to reach a comprehensive settlement despite the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group, the chief diplomatic body charged with mediating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The three co-chairs of the Minsk Group – the United States, Russia, and France – remain committed to helping the sides reach a peaceful, lasting resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Direct talks between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian President Serzh Sargsian in November 2013 suggest that a negotiated settlement remains possible. However, for any political settlement to succeed, there must also be detailed technical research to address the individual components of a peace agreement.

Project Description: Although the details of a proposed settlement remain under negotiation, serious work must be done to address the details of a peace agreement. Technical issues regarding internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees; reconstruction, infrastructure development, and telecommunications; water/natural resource sharing; and other related subjects require greater research before any peace plan can be implemented. A Virtual Fellow would select one or more of these issues to research in depth. The Fellow would then work closely with the U.S. Minsk Group Co-chair to provide recommendations and a plan based on his or her research.

Potential Fellow Taskings:

- **Conflict Relief:** A comparative study of post-conflict/post-disasters models for reconstruction and how these lessons could be applied within the Nagorno-Karabakh framework;
- **Telecommunications:** Research designed to determine the resources necessary to restore communications infrastructure to cover a majority of residents living in the occupied territories;
- **Identity Documentation:** Using precedents from around the South Caucasus region, develop a plan for providing the population with documents that would provide for international travel and allow for access to services prior to a final determination of NK's future status;
- **IDP Resettlement Approaches:** Construct a step-by-step plan, based on the physical, economic, and humanitarian considerations of previous cases, for the resettlement of Azerbaijani IDPs in the occupied territories.

Note: We welcome other proposals that might better fit the Fellow's experience or interests.

Program Requirements: The precepts of the Virtual Fellows Program call for Fellows to have a high degree of administrative, professional, or technical knowledge/experience and a minimum of five years of professional experience that is directly applicable to the assigned task.

Project-specific Knowledge, Skills, or Abilities:

- Previous academic or professional experience in conflict resolution, international development, humanitarian law, or other related fields;
- Research background (database and search skills) strongly preferred;
- Working knowledge of the South Caucasus region and at least limited knowledge of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

Clearance: The Fellow must be a U.S. citizen and must receive a Public Trust determination prior to starting his/her service. The Virtual Fellows Program staff will work with the accepted candidate to obtain the Public Trust determination. (Note: A candidate is NOT required to have a Public Trust determination prior to applying for this project.)

Remuneration: The Virtual Fellow will be appointed to the federal civil service as an intermittent, unpaid consultant. The Department assumes no responsibility for providing any salary or benefits to the Fellow in connection with his/her participation in the Program.